

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Caveney (5,608,621). The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

As pointed out in applicant's prior reply dated October 3, 2003, Caveney neither discloses nor suggests the product repairing method which includes a plurality of repair subscribers having a replacement part and one of the plurality of repair subscribers is selected in order to obtain the requested product. Applicant's claims recite retrieving a plurality of repair subscribers from a group of repair subscribers wherein the plurality of repair subscribers forms a sub-group of the group of repair subscribers. Thus, the group of repair subscribers is stored in the database 4 (Fig. 1) and some members of this group may have the requested part and other members may not. Thus, the retrieval step retrieves from the group of repair subscribers a smaller sub-group which forms the "plurality of repair subscribers," and members of this plurality of repair subscribers have the replacement part in stock and are willing to sell it. After one of the plurality of repair subscribers has been selected, the claim goes on to recite procuring the replacement part from the selected one repair subscriber and then, of course, repairing the product by using the replacement part.

In contrast, in Caveney, a customer places an order for one or more parts in an inventory and the inventory is supplied with parts from a supply source (see Caveney, Fig. 2, reference nos. 200, 204, 214; column 5, lines 22-46). The inventory is limited by the parts in the supply source. Since the inventory is only supplied from the supply source, the inventory does not retrieve a plurality of repair subscribers having the desired replacement part by means of a computer which stores a database that accumulates information on a group of the repair subscribers.

A feature of the present invention is that a company sells repair subscribers out-of-warranty inventory parts which can no longer be held by the company, and thereafter, if a demand for the part(s) arises, the company is reverse supplied with the inventory part(s) possessed by the repair subscribers.

In contrast thereto, the invention of the reference Caveney cited by the examiner is completely different from the present invention in construction. Namely, referring to Fig. 2 of the cited reference Caveney, the inventory (parts in stock) is, as shown by the arrow 206, only supplied from the company side to the user side, and there is no description concerning a reverse flow from the user side to the company side. That is, in the cited Caveney invention, there is no such disclosure, as in the present invention, where inventory parts are sold to users, and thereafter, if a demand for the part(s) arises, the inventory part(s) is reverse supplied.

The amendments to applicant's claims are intended to more clearly distinguish applicant's invention from the Caveney reference which, as indicated above, fails to disclose the group of repair subscribers and the plurality of repair subscribers having the replacement part which constitutes a sub-group of the larger group.

In view of the amendments made hereto and the comments set forth above, it is submitted that the Patent and Trademark Office has not made out a *prima facie* case of obviousness under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103.

The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 3-29-04

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